

**MSNBC "MORNING JOE" INTERVIEW WITH REPRESENTATIVE BILL DELAHUNT (D- MA)**

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MR. SCARBOROUGH: Let's go right now to Democratic representative from Massachusetts Congressman Bill **Delahunt**.

And you know, Barnicle, we tried to get him to run.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Look at him.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: He'd be Senator **Delahunt** this morning.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: That's right.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: He would be the 60th vote. But you know what? He's stubborn. **Delahunt's** stubborn. Why wouldn't he listen to me?

MR. BARNICLE: Well, he wouldn't listen, but he ought to know -- Congressman you ought to know that we are TiVoing this interview right now so that you will forever have visual evidence of when you took your career right into a bridge abutment.

(Laughter.) MR. SCARBOROUGH: So Bill, what happened last night in Massachusetts?

REP. **DELAHUNT**: I was smart, and I didn't run.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: Yeah. What happened last night in Massachusetts?

REP. **DELAHUNT**: Well, obviously, it's a reality check. And I disagree with the analysis about the security issue and terrorism.

Clearly, it's an issue.

But at its core, I think that we feel, meaning Democrats, not to recognize the order of magnitude of economic insecurity -- people are really concerned about whether they're going to be able to provide for their families.

And we failed to remind them that it was the economic policies of the previous administration and the previous Congress that got us in this mess.

We promised change; they're still looking for change.

We should have told them that, clearly, change is going to take time. You don't turn the Titanic on a dime.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Okay, but you know what? I think a year later -- and this is the year anniversary -- it's a little tiring to blame the last administration.

I think people are looking forward and wondering what the direction is this country is going in.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: You know what, the -- right. The president stated that at his inauguration: let's look forward. He made a valiant effort to do that.

Let's go back to the Reagan era. He was talking about Jimmy Carter into his second term.

This is not about blame; this is about accountability and explaining the reason, the rationale and the policies that got us in a real mess.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: Well, I think -- REP. **DELAHUNT**: Now, things are improving, but people don't -- they don't feel it. They don't see it.

MR. : Yeah. I agree with that.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: You know what? I think people are concerned that the direction out of this economic mess has been derailed by health care.

I think people are looking at this administration and wondering what the priorities are, and do they match their priorities.

Well, I'm not talking about health care; what I'm talking about is the mood, the anger that's out there.

Have we done a good job in health care, explaining it to the American people? The answer is no, clearly no. Now we've got to go back, we've got to look at how we go about telling the American people where health care is.

But first, we've got to attack those fundamental issues relative to the economy and bring some confidence to the American family that their jobs are out there, they're secure, and they have a future. That's where it begins.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: Brother Barnicle?

MR. BARNICLE: Hey, Congressman, you represent, perhaps, a model of a middle-class district, south of Boston onto Cape Cod.

So in your mind, first of all, do you think health care, the bill as proposed by the House and the Senate, is dead? Secondly, the House version you're saying, well, our trillion- dollar bill is better than the Senate version and theirs only costs \$850 billion.

How do you convince people that it's worth it to go forward with health care at a time when they, as you say, are concerned about their economic futures, their jobs? What do you do now legislatively about health care?

REP. **DELAHUNT**: I think what we're going to have to do is do it on an incremental basis.

There are aspects in both bills that have broad support, some of it bipartisan. I think we take those measures, bring them to the floor, and vote on them and explain them.

Clearly, it's difficult to explain a large, comprehensive, omnibus bill that people don't understand. There's a lot of misinformation about it, and we've got to simplify it. That's the way to address it. MR. BARNICLE: So in other words, you take, like, pre- existing condition for children, elements like that -- REP. **DELAHUNT**: Correct.

MR. BARNICLE: -- portability of health insurance, put that in one bill, go back and put it on the floor and say, vote on this, both Republicans and Democrats?

REP. **DELAHUNT**: I think so. That would be -- that's going to be my recommendation.

And I think that we would get a good policy out of a series of bills that were brought up over the next several months.

And I think what we should do is have discrete votes on all of those issues.

Let's fill the donut hole.

MR. BARNICLE: Would you get Republicans to go along with stuff like that?

REP. **DELAHUNT**: Well, if they don't get -- if they don't go along with it, I think they do it at their peril.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: (Inaudible.) REP. **DELAHUNT**: Okay? I think that's what happens.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: I was just going to say, Bill, everybody said, oh, the Republicans don't want to play along. Well, guess what?

The Democrats didn't want to play along with the Contract with America, but the provisions were so damn popular with the American people that 75 percent of -- nobody remembers this -- 75 percent of Democrats, I believe it is, went along with provisions in the Contract with America, on several of those provisions.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: Of course, Joe.

You can draft a bill with consumer protections that strips insurance companies of an antitrust exemption. And if I'm a Democrat, I'd dare any Republican to vote against that. REP. **DELAHUNT**: Exactly.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: I'd say, go ahead. Make my day. Vote against portability.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: I can give you four or five policy issues regarding health care today that I would bring to the floor independently, stand-alone, and have a vote on them.

And I daresay, by the time the last one was voted on, you'd find a bipartisan vote.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: Yeah.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: Because I think the approach makes sense, because you've got to bring it down so people can understand the issues.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: Mike -- REP. **DELAHUNT**: When you put out a whole array, it's just too complex.

MR. BARNICLE: Hey, Congressman, quickly, before we go, your housemate, Senator Chuck Schumer, did he get out of bed this morning?

REP. **DELAHUNT**: I think he's under the bed.

(Laughter.) MS. BRZEZINSKI: Oh, sweet thing!

REP. **DELAHUNT**: The last time I saw him, he was crawling under the bed. (Laughter.) I don't know what he was doing there -- MR. SCARBOROUGH: Hey, you know what? None of your business.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: You know, he is part of the Senate leadership, of course.

MS. BRZEZINSKI: (Inaudible.) MR. SCARBOROUGH: Yeah, he's under the bed, all right.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: (Inaudible) -- Senate leadership.

MR. SCARBOROUGH: (Inaudible) -- an honest New York candidate.

Thank you, Bill. It's always great talking to you.

REP. **DELAHUNT**: (Inaudible.)

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